MARVEL KNIGHTS®

MARVEL PSR 3

MARK MILLAR · TERRY DODSON · RACHEL DODSON

SPIDER-MAN®

DOWN AMONG THE DEAD MEN Part 3 of 4

PREVIOUSLY IN SPIDER-MAN

"DOWN AMONG THE DEAD MEN"

PART ONE OF FOUR

When a vandal defiles his Uncle Ben's headstone in the middle of the night, Peter Parker is called to the cemetery to investigate.

While there, he receives a phone call on his cell phone from a mysterious stranger who claims to know Parker's secret identity as Spider-Man. Peter, of course, claims that the caller is mistaken, until the man insinuates that he's kidnapped Peter's Aunt May.

In a panic, Peter frantically swings through the city—sans costume—to May's apartment, only to find the place smashed and ransacked with Aunt May nowhere in sight.

PART TWO OF FOUR

Peter Parker's worst nightmare is unfolding before his eyes. Someone from his past has discovered that he's Spider-Man and has attacked him using the people he loves most. His Aunt May has been kidnapped and an exhausted, desperate Spider-Man has been told by his criminal contacts that super-villains Electro and The Vulture are responsible...

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Daredevil wasn't home, Doctor Strange was on a house call and I made an IDIOT of myself in front of The Avengers.
The Owl was my best shot at finding out who kidnapped Aunt May and he told me it was ELECTRO and THE VULTURE. But how did they find out who I really AM?
YOU WANNA GIVE THE GIRL TWO MINUTES, SPIDER-MAN?
DOWN AMONG THE DEAD MEN
PART 3 OF 4
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WHAT?
I SAID TWO MINUTES TO LET THE GIRL GET OUTTA HERE.
SHE'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH ANY OF THIS AND SHE'S ONLY GONNA GET HURT ONCE YOU AND ME GET STARTED, RIGHT? WHAT D'YOU SAY?
FINE BY ME.
YOU REALLY THINK I'M THAT *STUPID*, ELECTRO?

YOU REALLY THINK I DON'T KNOW YOU BY NOW?
SPIDER-MAN!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING, MISTER TOOMES? TURN INTO THE VULTURE AND HELP HIM, FOR GOD'S SAKE!
IT DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY, SWEETHEART! THE WINGS ARE JUST A COSTUME AND THEY'RE BACK AT THE HELMSLEY ANYWAY!
VULTURE!
GOING NOWHERE, TOOMES!
Not until I find out what you've done with Aunt May.
Not until I find out why your dusty old hands are white-knuckled around that suitcase.
GOD ALMIGHTY! GIMME A HAND HERE, MAX! HIT HIM WITH A THOUSAND VOLTS OR SOMETHING!

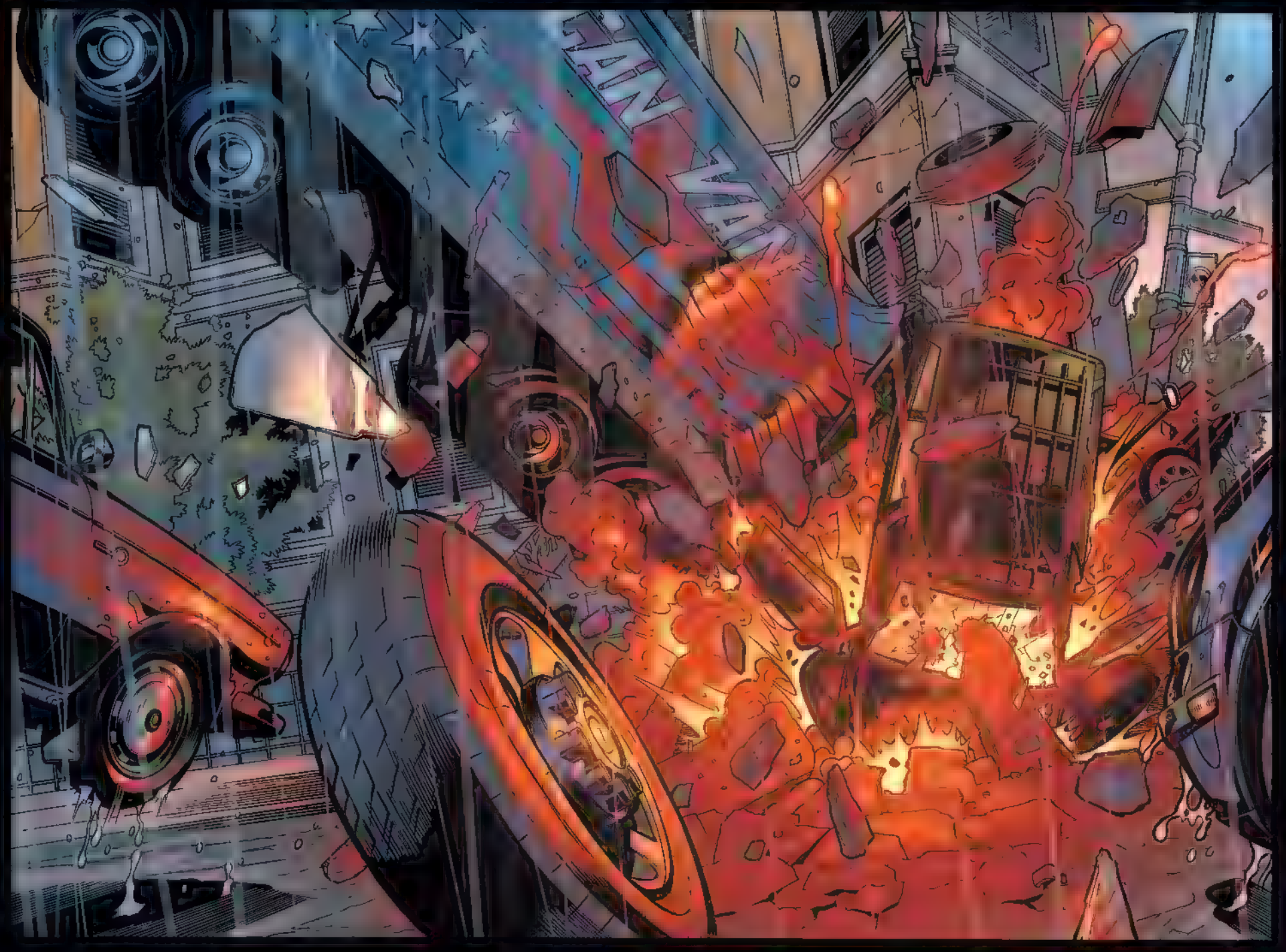
ADRIAN, YOU LET GO OF THAT SUITCASE AND YOU'RE THE ONE GETTING KENTUCKY-FRIED!
GAAH!
HOLY MOTHER OF JEEZUS.
THAT WAS ALL THE MONEY WE HAD, YOU IDIOT!
IT'S GONE, MAX. TWENTY MILLION DOLLARS SCATTERED ALL ACROSS THE NEIGHBORHOOD. WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO NOW?
I DUNNO, MAN, BUT I KNOW WHAT *YOU'RE* GONNA DO: YOU'RE GOING BACK TO GET THOSE WINGS AND THEN WE'RE GONNA CRUCIFY THIS CLOWN, YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M SAYING HERE?
NO MORE *FUN AND GAMES*, ADRIAN! WE'RE GONNA GET DOWN THERE AND TAKE SPIDER-MAN *APART* FOR THIS!

Twenty million bucks, is that what they were paid to snatch Aunt May? Does this mean there was someone else involved?
What kind of THIRD PARTY would pay twenty million dollars to kidnap a septuagenarian with a COCOA HABIT? This doesn't make any sense.
HOW D'YOU LIKE THE NEW COSTUME, SPIDER-MAN? THE CHICK WHO DOES MY WEB SITE HAD A FRIEND REDESIGN THIS FOR LESS THAN THREE THOUSAND BUCKS.
REALLY? AND I THOUGHT YOU WERE THE CROOK.
UNNH!
LOOKS TO ME MORE LIKE QUEER EYE FOR THE STRAIGHT GUY ANYWAY, DUDE.
NGGH!
MAN, WHERE DO YOU GET OFF SAYING MY SUIT LOOKS STUPID? AT LEAST MINE COMES WITH INSULATED BOOTS.
WHAT?

AAGGHH!!
Keep it together. Keep it together. Keep it together, Parker. You go down now and Aunt May's not coming back.
You let this idiot finish you off and they'll just bury her in the dirt beside Uncle Ben.
OW!
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU, HUH? THAT ACTUALLY HURT, YOU, LITTLE RUNT!
UNNH!
YOU GOT YOURSELF IN WAY OVER YOUR HEAD THIS TIME, SPIDER-MAN. THIS WAS JUST BETWEEN THE BAD GUYS. YOU SHOULDN'T EVEN BE INVOLVED.
YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE THE STUFF WE GET UP TO BEHIND YOUR BACKS. YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE THE STUFF WE DO THAT THE SUPER HEROES NEVER EVEN HEAR ABOUT.
What the hell's he talking about? How could these idiots kidnapping Aunt May NOT involve me?
Is it possible whoever's MASTERMINDING this crap never TOLD them who I really WAS?

NO!!
ELECTRO! LEAVE THESE PEOPLE ALONE!
THIS IS JUST BETWEEN YOU AND ME, MAN!
YEAH? WHO SAYS? YOU THINK WE'RE PLAYING BY THE MARQUIS OF QUEENSBERRY'S RULES OR SOMETHING?
YOU JUST COST ME AND TOOMES TWENTY MILLION DOLLARS AND I DUNNO ABOUT TOOMES, BUT I'M GONNA TAKE THAT OUTTA YOUR FRIGGIN' COLON!

MAX! STOP! DON'T DO THIS!
"MAX! STOP! DON'T DO THIS!"
ANY IDEA HOW PATHETIC YOU SOUND SOMETIMES?
THERE WERE KIDS IN THOSE CARS, YOU PIECE OF CRAP...
AND YOU DIDN'T THINK I WAS THIS DANGEROUS, HUH? YOU DIDN'T FIGURE I'D EVEN THINK OF STUFF LIKE SPARKING THE GAS IN THE FUEL TANK AND ALL SORTS OF CRAZY STUFF LIKE THAT?
WELL, PRISON GIVES YOU A LOTTA TIME TO JUST SIT AROUND AND TALK ABOUT NEW WAYS YOU CAN USE THESE FREAKY POWERS OF OURS, SPIDER-MAN.
IONIZING METAL WAS DOCTOR OCTOPUS' IDEA, BY THE WAY.
OH MY GOD...


MEN

ADRIAN? IT'S ME. LISTEN, YOU GOTTA GET DOWN HERE, PAL. THIS FIGHT'S GOING LIKE A *DREAM*. YEAH, I KNOW ABOUT THE MONEY, BUT I THINK HE'S GOT THE FLU OR SOMETHING
I'M COMPLETELY KICKING THE CRAP OUT OF HIM HERE AND YOU GOTTA GET A PIECE OF THIS BEFORE THE COPS SHOW UP.
NAH, NOBODY'S EVEN *APPEARED* YET THAT'S THE BEAUTIFUL THING I'D SAY WE GOT ANOTHER FIVE OR TEN...
WHAT? WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU *TALKING* ABOUT YOU'RE NOT AT THE HOTEL? I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU COULD FLY AT A HUNDRED MILES AN HOUR OR SOMETHING?
NOT WITHOUT THE WINGS, I CAN'T. THAT'S WHY I HAD TO GO BACK TO THE ROOM, GENIUS. WITHOUT THE WINGS ALL I DO IS FLOAT AND THE WIND'S COMPLETELY AGAINST ME HERE
I DIDN'T CALL FOR A WEATHER REPORT, ADRIAN. JUST GET YOURSELF DOWN HERE AND HELP ME FINISH HIM OFF, HUH?
I KNOW I'LL NEVER HEAR THE END OF IT IF YOU DON'T GET A FEW *KICKS AND PUNCHES* INTO THIS SON OF A...

HIT HIM!
NGH!
Forget the pain
Forget whatever he s trying to say
Don't even LOOK at that hazy, e ectromagnet c aura that only makes your head hurt anyway!
Just h t him til he can't get UP anymore!
UCHH!

AWWW, YOU LITTLE PUNK. I'M GONNA BURN YOUR FACE OFF FOR THIS. I'M GONNA CHARGE EVERY ATOM IN THIS ROOM AND LEAVE YOU LOOKING LIKE AN OVERCOOKED STEAK...
WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT YOU USING YOUR BRAIN MORE THESE DAYS?
OH SH...
NOW WHERE DID YOU HIDE HER, DIRT BAG?
WHERE DID YOU HIDE YOUR HOSTAGE?

WHAT?
MAY PARKER.
WHO?
DON'T PLAY GAMES WITH ME, MAX. THE OWL *TOLD* ME YOU K DNAPPED THE OLD WOMAN AND UNLESS YOU TELL ME WHERE YOU PUT HER TH S FIST IS GOING RIGHT THROUGH YOUR FACE, MAN
AW, GOD...
YOJ REALLY ARE AN *IDIOT*, YOU KNOW THAT, SPIDER-MAN? A COMPLETE AND UTTER *MORON!*
YOU THINK THIS IS *FUNNY*, CREEP?
WHAT THE HELL'S SO DAMN FUNNY?
YOU KNOW, THE K NGPIN USED TO BE A MOVIE PRODUCER IN HIS SPARE TIME?
WHAT?
OH, YEAH. LOTSA BIG MOVIES BEEN BACKED BY THE MOB OVER THE YEARS ALWAYS HAS BEEN, ALWAYS WILL BE.
NOT BECAUSE THEY APPRECIATE *CINEMA* OR NUTHIN'. JUST BECAUSE YOU GET YOUR *CASH* DRY-CLEANED BY INVEST NG IT IN PICTURES AND *SOMETIMES* END UP WITH A NICE *RETURN.*

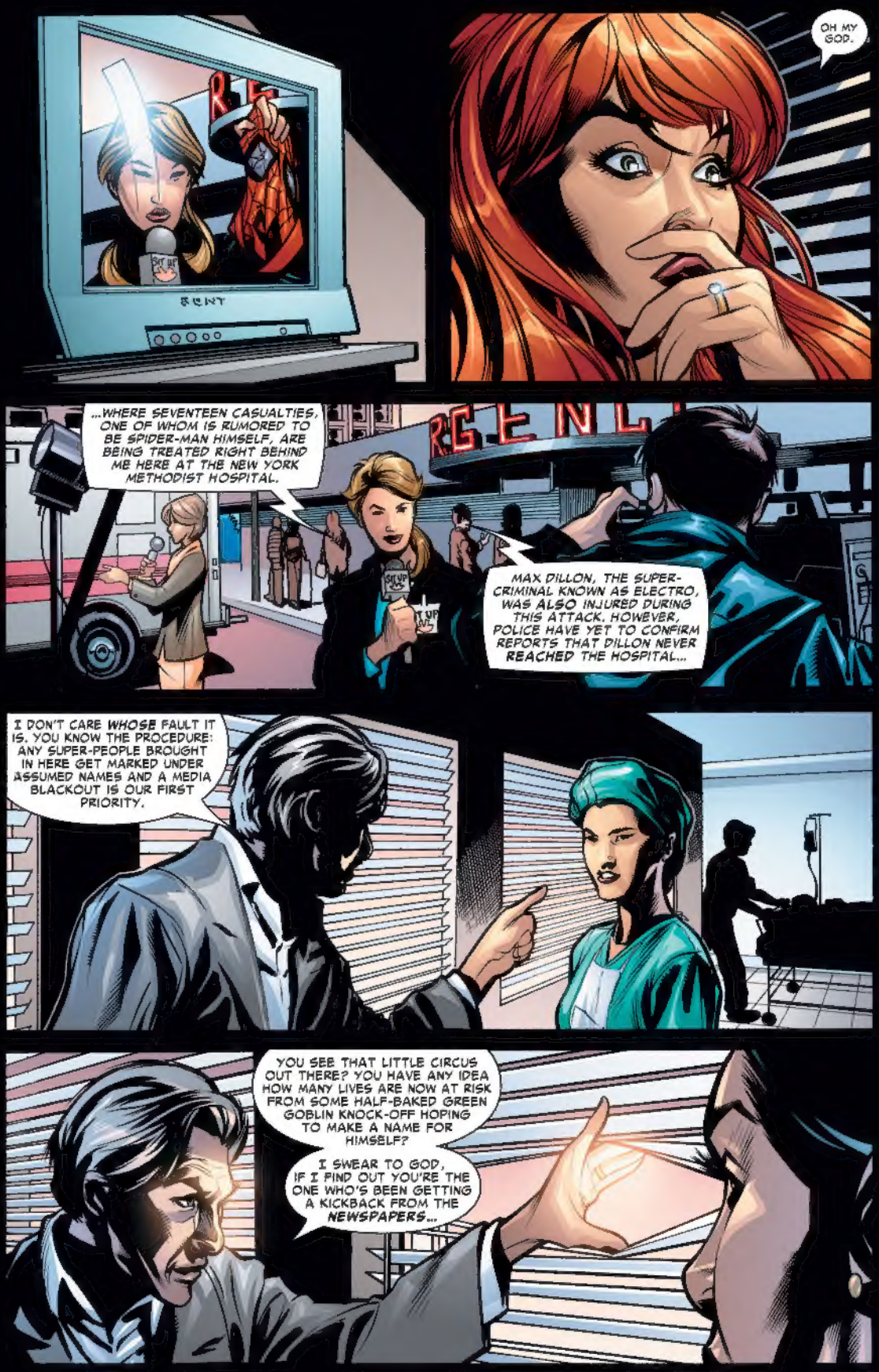
You remember that chase-movie last year with the Hollywood golden couple? The one that looked so damn sweet on paper, but got laughed outta the theaters?
Well, The Kingpin wasn't laughing. He was good for twenty million bucks of that picture and unless he got his money back, some FAMOUS HEADS were gonna roll.
That's where me and The Vulture came in. The Owl sent us out to collect the Fatman's old debt, but me and Toomes had ourselves a little BRAINWAVE.
Owl was fresh out of jail. Owl was just RE-ESTABLISHING himself and didn't have a decent GANG together yet. What was stopping us from just DISAPPEARING with his twenty mil on?
OH GOD...
DAMN RIGHT OH GOD. TRUTH IS WE'VE NEVER EVEN HEARD OF THIS CHICK YOU'RE LOOKING FOR, SPIDER-MAN
TRUTH IS THE OWL JUST PLAYED YOU LIKE A FRIGGIN' VIOLIN.
AAAGHH!!

Suddenly, I'm thinking about the time I won the science prize, Aunt May standing up and clapping on her own. Flash Thompson giggling and whispering a dirty joke about her.
How did a clever little boy end up a BAG-MAN for THE OWL? Was I really so freaked out my BRAIN jammed up or something?
WOH!
FIRE A WEB! FIRE A WEB! C'MON, man, all you gotta DO is hit the middle of your palm and...
HEY!
...squeeze.
I'm sorry, Aunt May. Sorry for this stupid hobby that keeps killing people I love. Now you're gonna die just like Uncle Ben and just like Uncle Ben...
...it's Peter Parker's fault
JEEZ, SOMEBODY WANNA PUNCH UP 911 OR SOMETHING?

WEEOOOWEEOOOWEE
WEEOOOWEEOOO
MALE, TWENTIES, VICTIM OF CRIMINAL ELECTROCUTION FOLLOWED BY INVOLVEMENT IN AN R.T.A.
TRAUMA TEAM REQUIRED, POSSIBLE NEUROSURGICAL AND INTENSIVE CARE ISSUE LET ORTHOPEDICS AND THE BURNS UNIT KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING TOO, HUH?
EMERGENCY
YOU HEAR WHO THEY GOT COMING IN WITH ALL THESE GUYS?
DAREDEVIL, RIGHT?
MAN, I HEARD IT WAS PASTE-POT PETE FROM THE FRIGHTFUL FOUR. I ALREADY CALLED MY WIFE AND PROMISED I'D GET A PICTURE WITH THAT FRIGGIN' LOSER
OUTTA THE WAY! C'MON, CLEAR A PATH! THIS GUY'S LOSING A LOT OF BLOOD HERE, PEOPLE!
AW, JEEZ...
THE HELL ARE YOU DOING TAKING PICTURES, FAT-BOY?
WHOA! SORRY, DIDN'T REALIZE THERE WAS A RULE OR ANYTHING, MAN...

THE GUY'S AS BAD AS HE LOOKS, DOC. FULL THICKNESS BURNS TO HIS UPPER CHEST AND SHOULDER WITH BARLY TISSUE EDEMA AND A FRACTURE DISLOCATION OF HIS HUMERAL HEAD.
JUST GET H M UP ON THE TABLE.
I THINK HE'S GOING TO NEED A LITTLE INTUBATION IF HIS AIRWAY'S AS COMPROM SED AS IT LOOKS. YOU WANT TO GET THAT SILLY MASK OFF?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
YOU CAN'T TAKE HIS MASK OFF. WHAT ABOUT H S SECRET IDENTITY?
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU, NINE YEARS OLD? JUST PASS ME THE SCISSORS BEFORE TH S GUY CHOKES TO DEATH, ROBINSON.
STRETCHIER THAN 'T LOOKS, HUH?
OKAY
NOW LET S GET DOWN TO BUSINESS...

HI, THIS IS MARY JANE. PETEY AND I ARE OUT RIGHT NOW, BUT IF YOU'D LIKE TO LEAVE A MESSAGE, WE'LL CALL YOU BACK THE SECOND WE GET HOME.
BEEP!
To Do!
PETER, IT'S ME. LISTEN, I KNOW THERE'S NO WAY YOU'RE GONNA BE HOME THIS EARLY, BUT I JUST WANTED TO LET YOU KNOW I'M CATCHING THE FIRST FLIGHT BACK TO NEW YORK IN THE MORNING.
I'VE BEEN STUCK IN THIS STINKING MOTEL ALL NIGHT AND I'M FREAKING OUT EVERY TIME SOMEBODY EVEN WALKS PAST THE DOOR, TIGER.
IT'S HORRIBLE. THIS JUST FEELS LIKE THE WORST ONE EVER AND I DON'T WANT TO BE SITTING HERE CHECKING MY E-MAIL WHILE YOU'RE GOING THROUGH HELL BACK THERE LOOKING FOR MAY.
CABLE TV
POOL
BESIDES, IF I'D REALLY BEEN A TARGET THEY'D HAVE SNATCHED ME INSTEAD OF MAY SO IT REALLY DOESN'T MATTER WHETHER I'M HIDING OUT HERE IN THE STICKS OR...
OR...


OH MY GOD.
...WHERE SEVENTEEN CASUALTIES, ONE OF WHOM IS RUMORED TO BE SPIDER-MAN HIMSELF, ARE BEING TREATED RIGHT BEHIND ME HERE AT THE NEW YORK METHODIST HOSPITAL.
MAX DILLON, THE SUPER-CRIMINAL KNOWN AS ELECTRO, WAS ALSO INJURED DURING THIS ATTACK. HOWEVER, POLICE HAVE YET TO CONFIRM REPORTS THAT DILLON NEVER REACHED THE HOSPITAL...
I DON'T CARE WHOSE FAULT IT IS. YOU KNOW THE PROCEDURE: ANY SUPER-PEOPLE BROUGHT IN HERE GET MARKED UNDER ASSUMED NAMES AND A MEDIA BLACKOUT IS OUR FIRST PRIORITY.
YOU SEE THAT LITTLE CIRCUS OUT THERE? YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MANY LIVES ARE NOW AT RISK FROM SOME HALF-BAKED GREEN GOBLIN KNOCK-OFF HOPING TO MAKE A NAME FOR HIMSELF?
I SWEAR TO GOD, IF I FIND OUT YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S BEEN GETTING A KICKBACK FROM THE NEWSPAPERS...

THE HELL WAS THAT?
OUT OF MY WAY, LITTLE MAN.
OH MY GOD! WHAT'S GOING ON IN THERE?
I DUNNO, SIR. THEY'VE LOCKED THE DOOR!
THIS ISN'T FAIR! YOU CAN'T DO THIS! HE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW WHERE HE IS, YOU JERK!

TAKE A LOOK AT THE DISCOVERY CHANNEL, SWEETHEART.
THIS IS WHAT VULTURES DO.
To be continued...